



Through the Vine

A Quarterly Newsletter of the OSU Extension Fairfield County Master Gardeners

Mission: To make a difference in the community in which you live through gardening education and knowledge.

Winter 2022

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2022 Fairfield County Fair News

by Connie Smith, Master Gardener Coordinator

Scarecrows on the Fairgrounds

The people's choice winner of the 2022 "First-Ever" Fairfield County Fair Scarecrow Contest was "Helga ... The Poultry Barn Scarecrow."



Helga, the Poultry Barn Scarecrow

In cooperation with the Fairfield County Senior Fairboard, Visit Fairfield County and the Fairfield County Master Gardeners, scarecrows were created to welcome visitors to the Fairfield County Fairgrounds in 2022. 4-H clubs were challenged to create scarecrows representing their club

or highlighting some of their 4-H projects. 16 total scarecrows were displayed from local FFA Chapters and 4-H clubs. The Qualtrics survey created for voting captured nearly 80 emails plus gave us the knowledge that our County Fair visitors/respondents voting were from five Ohio Counties with one respondent as far away as Plymouth County, Iowa.

Best of Show

Congratulations to Susie Carpenter, Master Gardener Class of 2022, for being awarded Best of Show at the 2022 Fairfield County Fair for her pink Japanese Anemone flower specimen. In all, Susie received eight blue ribbons, eleven red ribbons and five white ribbons for her flower specimen entries.



Susie Carpenter with her winning entries



CONNIE'S CORNER

The History of the Fairfield County Master Gardener Program

Recently, several of the members of the Fairfield County Master Gardener group wanted to learn more about the history of the MGV program in Fairfield County. The concept for starting Master Gardeners in Ohio began as a training model from the University of Virginia with 12 participants from the Eastern Region of OSU Extension Counties. After two years of training, the first Ohio State Master Gardener Training Manual was introduced, and training around the state began. Our first year of training was in 1996 with 18 members in our class. It truly was a learning experience for all involved. The mission of the Fairfield County program has always been to build a family of lifelong learners who give back to the communities in which they live through education.



Courthouse Master Gardener Volunteers

The early years of the Fairfield County Master Gardener program found us in Bremen, Ohio partnering with Flowers of the Good Earth hosting a Spring Garden Party. We offered a variety of well-known garden author speakers from all over the state and country including Ken Druse, Felder Rushing and Dr. Cookie Trivett, who talked about lots of plants and of course, great food!! Gardeners always love to

eat!! The Garden Party was our original fund-raiser and we had a 10 year run with this effort. We also began finding projects to give back to the Community.



Earth Camp 2011

One of our very first projects was to design and care for the landscape around the historic Fairfield County Courthouse. While under the care of Ann Huston, and eventually Dianna Wears, as Coordinators, the gardens were featured on the Fairfield Heritage Garden Tour and the State Master Gardener Conference Tour and were utilized every day as a tranquil place for the workers of the Fairfield County Courthouse.

To grow the program, we eventually found our way to Keller Farms Garden Center and Greenhouse on Lithopolis Road near Carroll. With the help of my dear friend Doris Marcus, we created biweekly programs in the greenhouse/garden center for several years. Doris and I did everything from lawn care tips to caring for hanging baskets, creating awesome containers, herbal cooking and so much more. Those were great times and we made so many friends who are now Master Gardener Volunteers through this outreach. Doris has been gone for three years and I still often fondly remember the fun and good times at Keller's with Doris and owner, Bernie Fleming.



Tomato Tasting

Continued on page 3

CONNIE'S CORNER *continued from page 2*

We continued to train Master Gardeners every other year in Fairfield County averaging 18 to 20 gardeners with each training. Since Fairfield County is centrally located, we often included trainees from Perry, Hocking and Pickaway Counties. With each year of training came new project ideas and new outreach into the community. Some of those project highlights have included the Courthouse Project that transitioned into the Ag Center Project, the Broad Street Entrance Garden at the Fairgrounds, Tomato Tasting which started at Nightcrawler Gardeners and is now at the Ag Center, and the Master Gardener Newsletter, which is a great way to stay connected quarterly.

The Opportunity Center Gardens/Farm Market at Coonpath Road is now the Learning Never Ends Project in Pickerington and Lancaster. The Wagnalls Garden project returned to our list of key projects. While many Master Gardener groups around the State have a central location for their project work, over the years the Fairfield County Master Gardeners have found transitioning projects into the various communities works well for give back hours as many folks like to give back to the community in which they live.

Our next major fund raiser for the group evolved into 10 years of Dig into Gardening at Christ United Methodist Church in Baltimore. We had a great plan, train one year and host the Dig the other. The Dig is a one-day educational opportunity for all gardeners. Some of the MGV funds were spent on a fun trip or event for our MGV's via bus trips, holiday gatherings and much more!! And then COVID hit!! We are still finding our way back from almost two years of inactivity.

As with everything in life, projects have come and gone within the Fairfield County Master Gardener program, which are vital to keeping the program alive and growing. Over the course of time, we have trained well over 250 MGV's in Fairfield County. Some volunteer in their home

counties and some are just not able to contribute actively to the program. And of course, we have lost several of our dear Master Gardener friends, leaving us with great memories of friendships shared.

The one constant asset in the Fairfield County Program is the people!! Over the years, we have struggled with a least two different computer programs to record hours, track project work and continuing education. The paperwork is important and can be frustrating at times. And, communication methods have certainly changed over 26 years. Very rarely do we send U.S. Mail communications, everything is now email and electronically based. But, as I think back over the 26 years of Master Gardener work in Fairfield County ... I remember the people, the fun, and the willingness to give back. The mission for me still remains the same ... continue to grow the Fairfield County Master Gardener program with a commitment of giving back to community while disseminating research-based information and educational opportunities and outreach.

Thanks to each of you for making this program one of the best in the State. We truly have built a community of great people doing really good things!!

Kindly,
Connie Smith
Master Gardener Coordinator
Smith.3204@osu.edu



MGV Class 2017

MASTER GARDENER NEWS

Fairfield MGV's Awarded Community Service Award

by *Connie Smith, Master Gardener Coordinator*



Congratulations to the Fairfield County Master Gardener Volunteers for recently being awarded the Master Gardener Community Service Award for the “In the News” Blog. Ohio State

University Extension MGV Awards are given to those counties who exemplify excellence in their work with the MGV program. “THE NEWS in Fairfield County” blog site was started as means of informing and empowering community members to become engaged in the OSU programming efforts and activities of the Fairfield County Extension office. But THE NEWS blog has become so much more. It serves as the foundation for sharing local news columns offering timely information on what to do in the lawn and garden, insects, soil conditions and more. In addition, video recordings and YOUTUBE recordings with Master Gardeners are shared for distribution on THE NEWS blog.

During the outbreak of Covid 19, we struggled to find a good way to stay connected to our county residents with timely information. OSU Extension in Fairfield County has weekly news columns in both the Lancaster Eagle Gazette and the Towne Crier. In addition, we have a local radio show on WLRY 88.9FM, “The Saturday Morning Farm Page.” The creation of “THE NEWS in Fairfield County” blog would increase our reach of information we could create and share. If you are interested in subscribing to the “THE NEWS in Fairfield County” blog site simply follow this link <https://u.osu.edu/thenews/> and click on the subscribe button. It is a free blog site that is maintained by staff at OSU Extension in Fairfield County. You can also look at some of the archived newspaper articles and radio shows. Be sure to check it out!

MGVs Lend a Helping Hand

by *Connie Smith, Master Gardener Coordinator*

On Friday, November 4 the Fairfield County Master Gardeners met at Lise Ricketts garden to lend a helping hand by cleaning off her tomato and flower gardens. Lise had spent much of the summer caring for her husband Mike, who recently passed away. This project was simply a way to show kindness and caring to our fellow Master Gardener and friend, Lise. Below is the note Lise shared on the Master Gardener Facebook Page.

From Lise Ricketts: “I normally never ask for help but when over 20 Master Gardener friends show up to clean up my garden for the winter, I feel blessed. Thank You for Your Support Fairfield County Master Gardener Volunteers—OSU Extension. ❤️



Tip: Keep on Watering

source: *University of Minnesota Yard and Garden*

Our plants are moving into dormancy; that is, shutting down the processes involved with active growing for the winter. However, plants continue to need moisture to keep roots, needles, buds and some leaves (think boxwoods and Rhododendrons) viable through the cold months ahead. Consider rainfall and water plants when it dries up until the ground freezes or until you have to turn off your outdoor spigots. Add leaf mulch around plants to help hold in valuable moisture.

MASTER GARDENER NEWS

Growing Your Own Salad MGV Founder's Day Event

by Kay Sargent, Master Gardener 2022



Fairfield County Master Gardener Volunteers provided kids with a hands-on activity at Canal Winchester's Founders Day Festival on October 15, 2022. Kids often don't realize how their food is grown,

so this was an opportunity for MGVs to show them how they could grow their own salads.

Lettuce grows rapidly and could be harvested for a winter salad. Black Seeded Simpson proved to be a great selection as it germinates well and is commonly grown today. An added benefit was that it was developed back in the late 1800's, around the time Canal Winchester was founded.

MGV's emphasized the reuse of materials. Applesauce and pudding cups were repurposed for pots. The newly potted seeds were packaged in newspaper sleeves for transport home. Kids also were given bookmarks to help them remember how to take care of their newly planted lettuce.



Jackie Marion and Connie Smith germinated the idea for this activity. Thanks to all that donated seeds, pots and sleeves. Special thanks to MGVs that worked on Founders Day: Pam Hutton, Kathy Cassidy, Kelly Van Scoy, Yvette Warstall, Keith Eichhorn, KJ Shields and Kay Sargent. This was a fun project that can be easily replicated for other events.

AG Center Cleanup

by Pamela Hutton, Master Gardener 2022



November 14th was a beautiful cold day but we quickly got warm with all the work. Nancy Weidman did a good job keeping us on track in pulling the annuals, pulling weeds, trimming Perennials, watering and overall cleanup!

Newsletter Deadlines

Do you have an article, garden musing, photo from an MGV project, calendar event or other idea you'd like to submit for the MGV newsletter? Articles and information are welcome at any time! Material not used in the current newsletter will be saved for a later edition. Newsletters are published quarterly with the following submission deadlines:

Spring Newsletter—submit by **February 1**

Summer Newsletter—submit by **May 1**

Autumn Newsletter—submit by **August 1**

Winter Newsletter—submit by **November 1**

MASTER GARDENER NEWS

SEEING IS BELIEVING ... The Spotted Lantern Fly Educational Tour

by *Carrie Brown, OSU Extension Educator,
Fairfield County*



Like many other states in the Midwest, Ohio is preparing for imminent infestations of Spotted Lanternfly (SLF). This invasive planthopper, first detected in Pennsylvania in 2014, poses a threat to the fruit production and plant growth of valuable specialty crops, most notably grapevines.

Though infestations have already been confirmed in several counties throughout Ohio, history tells us that additional infestations will continue to appear and grow. Many eastern states have already been contending with this nuisance for the past few years and possess valuable experience and knowledge.

Seven members of OSU Extension, including Extension Educators from across the state and a Viticulture Outreach Specialist, participated in this study tour in mid-October. Funded by an internal grant targeted towards improving ANR team functioning & deliverables and organized by Lucas County ANR Extension Educator, Amy Stone, tour objectives included visiting locations in Pennsylvania and Ohio experiencing a variety of infestation levels; increasing our knowledge by speaking with experts who have firsthand SLF experience; and developing a timeline for outreach tools and materials for Ohio as we learn from others who have experienced SLF before us.

Our tour began in Pittsburgh, PA where we visited infestations near active railways. Here, we spotted an abundance of adult SLFs and freshly laid egg masses. For some of our Extension

Educators, this was their first time observing SLF, firsthand. Next, we visited Penn State Extension in Allegheny County. We spoke with Penn State Urban Forestry Extension Educator, Brian Wolyniak, who shared valuable insights on combating SLF in the urban setting and how he has adapted methods based on growing SLF populations. We also participated as a group in a webinar on reporting SLF, led by Matt Travis, SLF Policy Manager for USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. Afterwards, Rich Vrboncic and Jason Rihn of Bartlett Tree Experts led us on an exploration of several sites throughout the Pittsburgh area that have been confronted with varying levels of SLF infestation. They discussed the pros and cons of different control methods, along with the interactions and expectations of their customer base.

The next day was spent in Cleveland, Ohio amongst some of the earliest infestations in the state. We took part in a delimiting survey using methods established by the Ohio Department of Agriculture. Using the Great Lakes Early Detection Network (GLEDN), we surveyed two areas within the city with known infestations, reporting the populations we found and gaining the expertise needed to hold similar surveys in our own counties. We also discussed approaches to engaging community members and existing volunteers, such as our Extension Master Gardener Volunteers, to assist in future surveying efforts as new populations are discovered.

Our study tour provided a multitude of valuable take-aways. Throughout our visit, we had the chance to meet with both Extension and industry experts. This allowed us to gain perspective on the impacts of SLF and to form points of contact, collaborators, and partners that will enhance our future outreach and engagement. We also had ample opportunity to strengthen connections with each other, along with time to develop a timeline for outreach tools and other materials. We left the tour armed with new insights that could only be gained by experiencing infestations firsthand and are now better equipped to handle SLF as its presence increases and impacts grow.

JUST FOR FUN

Gardner’s Puzzle *by Dianna Wears, Master Gardener 2011*

For one of those dark days of winter, dreaming about the next growing season ...

Each gardener lives in a different colored house, grows a different type of garden, uses different kinds of mulch, has a favorite garden tool, and drinks a different beverage while gardening. Solve the puzzle using the numbered clues to complete the table below and determine who drinks water and which gardener’s favorite tool is a garden weasel. (“Left” and “Right” refer to your left and right orientation when looking at the table.)

1. There are 5 houses.
2. The rose grower lives in the green house.
3. The woodland gardener’s favorite tool is the D-handled shovel.
4. Iced tea is consumed in the blue house.
5. The hosta grower drinks diet Coke.
6. The blue house is immediately to the right of the white house.
7. The cocoa fiber mulch gardener’s favorite garden tool is a pruner.
8. No mulch is used at the pink house.
9. Gatorade is drunk in the middle house.
10. The cottage gardener lives in the first house.
11. The hosta grower lives next to the house whose favorite tool is a hoe.
12. No mulch is used in the house next to the house whose favorite tool is snail bait.
13. The compost gardener drinks lemonade.
14. The sun gardener uses cypress mulch.
15. The cottage gardener lives next to the yellow house.
16. The white house is to the immediate right of the green house.
17. The cottage gardener lives next to the house with black mulch.
18. The lemonade drinker lives in the white house.
19. Cypress mulch is used by the iced tea drinker.
20. Snail bait is the favorite tool of the Hosta grower.

So, who drinks water? Which gardener’s favorite tool is the garden weasel?

House	1	2	3	4	5
Color					
Garden Style					
Beverage					
Mulch					
Favorite Tool					

Little Bluestem 2022 Perennial Plant of the Year

by Kay Sargent, Master Gardener 2022

Little Bluestem, *Schizachyrium scoparium*, was named the 2022 Perennial Plant of the Year (PPY) by the Perennial Plant Association. While the Association often names specific cultivars, this year they decided that all little bluestems, with their various statures and colors, deserved to be the PPY. This native grass provides three seasons of beauty, needs little care, and gives habitat and food to birds and butterflies. What more can you ask for?

Little bluestem is native to much of North America including all of Ohio. While it may never be as common as other natives such as *Echinacea purpurea*, purple coneflower, it can be a beautiful plant in hard to grow locations. It will thrive in dry, low fertility, sunny locations, even in the troublesome root zones of black walnuts. Little bluestem will tolerate both sandy and clay soils, in fact it has such a large, fibrous root system it is planted for erosion control and on steep slopes. And, it doesn't have any pests! As for maintenance, just cut it back to 2-4" in late winter or early spring.

Little bluestem gets its common name from the bluish cast to its stems. As a warm season, clumping grass it emerges late in the spring. For the first few months of its growing season it is a mound of grass in blue greens, blues, purples or even pinks, depending on the selection or cultivar. In late summer stems elongate into flowering stalks, often more than doubling the height of the plant. The fluffy inflorescences and seed heads delicately wave in the wind. Their subtle colors range from pale blue to pink to silvery white. When hit with frost, little bluestems' colors change again, darkening to coppers, burgundies, and purples.

There are now many commercially available little bluestem cultivars adaptable to a garden setting. Carousel and Jazz are the smallest, heading out at 2.5 feet. Blaze, Prairie Blues, The Blues and Smoke Signal are mid-sized grasses. If you are looking for something more stately, Blue Heaven, Standing Ovation and Twilight Zone head out at four feet or more.

Combine little bluestem with other native perennials such as goldenrod, cone flowers and rudbeckia. It is also a delightful accent to chrysanthemums, yarrows, dark leafed heucheras and tall sedums like "Autumn Joy." Drifts of little bluestem can be striking, particularly in the fall and winter, when the flower and seed heads sway in the breeze.



Little bluestem 'Blue Heaven' and Feather Reed Grass 'Karl Forester' in the fall. Photo by Mary Meyer.

The seeds of the little bluestem will attract a variety of birds throughout the winter. They will use these bunch grasses for nesting and winter protection. It is also a host plant to several skipper butterfly caterpillars.



Smoke Signal lives up to its name in a mixed flower bed. Photo by Mary Meyer.

Historically, little bluestem provided high protein food for bison and other grazing mammals. While deer may brows on it, little bluestem will bounce back.

Try planting a cultivar of little bluestem, *Schizachyrium scoparium*, for its beauty, ease of growing and benefit to wildlife. This 2022 Perennial Plant of the Year will bring you year-round joy!

See page 9 for a complete list of Little Bluestem Cultivars

Little Bluestem continued from page 8

Little Bluestem Cultivars

Schizachyrium scoparium: 2022 Perennial Plant of the Year

Cultivars	Height in Bloom	Habit	Foliage	Fall Color
S. scoparium	Varies	Lanky	Bluish stems	Maroon, purple
Carousel	2.5'	Compact, upright	Blue-green, pink highlights	Copper, pink, mahogany
Jazz	2.5'	Upright, bushy	Blues, muted colors	Purples, maroon
Blaze	3'	Compact, upright	Light blue, blue-green	Fiery reds, purple, orange, pink
Prairie Blues	3'	Upright	Blue-gray	Red-orange
The Blues	3'	Upright	Blue with red stem accents	Purple, orange, shades of blue
Smoke Signal	3-4'	Slender, refined	Blue-green	Scarlet, deep red-purple
Blue Heaven	4'	Upright	Light blue	Deep pink-burgundy with copper leaf tips
Standing Ovation	4'	Upright	Blues, greens, pinks, purple	Red-orange, burgundy
Twilight Zone	4-4.5'	Upright, columnar	Pastel tones	Silvery bright purple, very colorful



Home Composting!! How do I Get Started?

by *Connie Smith, Program Assistant—OSU Extension Fairfield County*



Have you ever wondered about composting from home? This is a practical and convenient way to handle yard trimmings including all of those leaves, grass, chopped

brush and plant clippings. Did you know yard trimming and kitchen scraps represent more than 30% of what we throw away? Composting is the natural process of recycling organic matter such as leaves, food scrapes and peelings into a valuable fertilizer that can enrich the soil and plants. Anything that grows eventually decomposes. Composting simply speeds up the process by providing an ideal environment for bacteria fungi and other decomposing organisms to do their work. The resulting decomposed matter which ends up looking like garden soil is compost and often called “black gold.”

How do I get started ? First think about the type of container you might want. It can be something as simple as woven bins which are easy to make and very economical. Or, you can build a nice cement block bin, construct a wooden pallet bin or simply purchase a compost bin at a local hardware store. Whatever will work best in your situation, you will find it very easy to get started with minimal investment. The most efficient recommended size for your composting effort is at least 3 X 3 ft.

Siting the Compost bin is something you need to consider by thinking about where the bin will be most usable and convenient for you to use. You will need an area with good air circulation. It will be best if you locate it near the garden where much of your plant material will come from and within easy access to your kitchen, if you are going to add kitchen scraps. Since you want the compost pile to be sponge damp when getting started, locating it near a water source is going to be helpful. Next, consider how much time you spend entertaining outdoors and where you like to entertain the most.

Even though you should have no odors when composting it might not be most visually appealing to have a compost bin near your outdoor living spaces.

The other investment you should make as you begin your composting journey is a compost thermometer. As you begin the layering process you will be able to record the temperatures of the compost pile. If layered correctly your compost pile should heat up to a temperature of 140 degrees in about one week.

Getting started is easy. Simply remove the grass and sod cover from the area where your compost pile will be constructed to allow for direct contact with the materials containing soil microorganisms.

Layer 1: Three to four inches of Chopped Brush & other coarse material to allow good air flow through the pile.

Layer 2: Six to eight inches of scraps, leaves, and grass clippings. Materials should be “damp.”

Layer 3: One inch of soil to add microorganisms.

Layer 4: Sprinkle with Lime/or Wood Ash and moisten pile if necessary

Items that you can use in your compost pile can include: Leaves, Lawn Clippings, Vegetables, Fruit Waste, Coffee Grounds, Egg Shells, Shredded Newspaper and Trimmed healthy plant material. Items that should not be in your compost pile include: Meat Scraps, Dairy Scraps, Cheeses, Glazed or color printed magazines, Diseased plants and Pet poop.

Once you get your compost pile completed you might notice your pile “settling” within a week or so. This is normal and means the pile is beginning to decompose. This is a great time to start your compost pile with the abundance of fall leaves. And, by getting started now, you will have some “black gold” to begin your vegetable/flower gardening season in 2023. For more details on Composting at home check out the Ohio State University Fact Sheet entitled “Composting at Home” online at <https://ohioline.osu.edu/factsheet/hyg-1189-99> or call OSU Extension in Fairfield County at 740-653-5419 to have a copy of the fact sheet mailed directly to you.

“Just Add Ice” Orchids

by *Dianne Wears, Master Gardener 2011*



When people learn that I grow orchids, they often ask about or tell me that they bought an orchid plant and follow the directions to water weekly with two or three ice cubes. My

standard response is, “Do you like cold feet? Well, your orchids don’t like cold feet either; they are tropical plants.”

“Just Add Ice Orchids” is a marketing gimmick ... they want to sell orchids and are not interested in your nurturing or flowering them again. The following is an article from the web page of Carter and Holmes Orchids in Newberry, South Carolina.

Why You Should NOT Just Add Ice

By now many orchid growers, beginner and experienced alike, have heard the theory about watering orchids with ice cubes. In case you haven’t, it goes something like this:

“Water your orchid with three ice cubes a week and it will be happy as can be!”

Sadly, though it may be given with the best of intentions, this advice is problematic and has caused a lot of misinformation to be spread online and through social media. The kernel of truth in the “Just Add Ice” myth/ marketing gimmick is that most people who kill orchids do so by overwatering them. But it’s not the amount of water people use when watering orchids that leads to over watering, it’s how long the roots stay wet.

Remember where your orchid is from. Plants known as “Ice Orchids” are simple Phalaenopsis Orchids or “Moth Orchids” that originate in tropical Southeast Asia. They are intermediate to warm growing, which means their native environment is usually a minimum of 60 degrees any time of year. Not really “ice cube” type weather.

Phalaenopsis in nature grow attached to trees, shrubs or outcroppings with their roots exposed. They are watered frequently by rainfall, but

because their roots don’t have much around them to hold water, they dry out between waterings. Their roots need humidity but should not stay soggy.

We always suggest watering potted orchids thoroughly from the top of the pot, with room temperature or tepid water. Water well enough to saturate the media so that it stays damp for a minimum of 4-5 days or as long as 7-10 days.

This number won’t be exact because it varies with the amount of light, humidity and airflow and with the temperature where they are grown. If your plant is staying wet for longer than 10-14 days, then additional airflow may be needed. If your potted orchid needs water more than twice per week, then not enough water is being given or it’s time to consider repotting. If the mix is very dry on watering day, water well and come back twenty minutes later and water again. This helps the outer layer of bark, mulch or moss absorb the moisture better. Plus, it flushes free any water impurities or fertilizer salts that collect in the pot.

This wet-dry cycle is needed in one form or another for many of the most commonly found orchids. Adding a few cubes to the top of the media does not address the need to thoroughly water the roots and potting media. As the ice melts, some water trickles into the pots, but not enough to really provide humidity or flush the potting mix of any water impurities or fertilizer salts. Also, remember, these are tropical plants. The ice is likely to cause damage to the roots and foliage it comes in contact with.

Ice cubes may work for some growers for a while, but they are not what your Phalaenopsis needs long term. “Ice Orchids” fit with the marketing strategy of box stores, grocery stores and hardware stores today that sell orchids as a “disposable” alternative to cut flowers. The flowers last longer than a bouquet of cut flowers, and since they are usually very cost friendly, if they die in 6-12 months, many people are okay with replacing them. We teach our visitors and new customers how to care for orchids with an eye to the future. Orchids can be a long-term investment that produce a lot of joy. Bringing your well-grown orchid into bloom year after year can be extremely rewarding.

GARDEN MUSINGS

Reflections

by Terese Houle, Master Gardener 2019

“Gardening, perhaps, offers more opportunities to put meaning and productivity into our lives than any other leisure activity.” - Robert Rodale



As the traditional gardening season comes to a close, and my gardens have been put to bed (no pun intended), I am grateful that I now have time to reflect in my gardening journal about all the highs and lows of the season. Questions I like to ponder include:

- What did well and what was a challenge?
- Did my trials go as expected or do I need to attempt something new in the following season? What were the weather conditions and how did they impact the success or failure of my vegetables and flowers?
- Did I encounter the same pests as prior years or did the management practices I incorporated work to deter them?

These are just some of the subjects I like to reflect upon so that when I begin planning for the 2023 growing season, I can refer back to my musings and hopefully learn from them.

However, this year, I plan to add one additional reflection to my journal – why I am so proud to be a part of the Fairfield County Master Gardener Volunteer program. This year I had the honor of being a part of the Helping Hands in the Garden volunteer group, coordinated by Linda Knically. I have always enjoyed gardening and “playing in the dirt,” but being able to do this while also helping someone who is either battling cancer or suffering from the effects of cancer, brought a new sense of meaning to why we do what we do. Each project warmed my heart in a new and profound way, just knowing that our group of master gardener volunteers brightened the day for someone who has been facing so many difficulties.

I also find myself reflecting on how many of us came together recently to help fellow MGV Lise Ricketts during her time of need following the loss of her husband. My heart swelled as people continued to arrive on that morning in an effort to help tackle the project of putting her gardens to bed for the winter. It was a wonderful reminder of why I am a master gardener volunteer. I am honored to be a part of this wonderful group of thoughtful, insightful and kind people.

Solutions to Gardner’s Puzzle—page 10

House	1	2	3	4	5
Color	Pink	Yellow	Green	White	Blue
Garden Style	Cottage Garden	Hostas	Roses	Woodland	Sun
Beverage	Water	Diet Coke	Gatorade	Lemonade	Iced Tea
Mulch	None	Black	Cocoa Fiber	Compost	Cypress
Favorite Tool	Hoe	Snail bait	Pruners	D-handle shovel	Garden Weasel

The cottage gardener drinks water. The sun gardener’s favorite tool is the garden weasel.



GARDEN MUSINGS

The Winter Garden *a poem by Robin Leja, Master Gardener 2013*

The Winter Garden

My garden is at rest right now, but I know it waits for me.

So sleep sweetly daffodils. Gather yellow sunshine into your petals.

Rest easy roses. Before long your buds will re-emerge in gorgeous glory.

Enjoy a winter nap hydrangeas. Save up all your energy for next year's flowers.

Dream on clematis. Reach your roots down, down into the warmth of the earth, so you can show off once again.

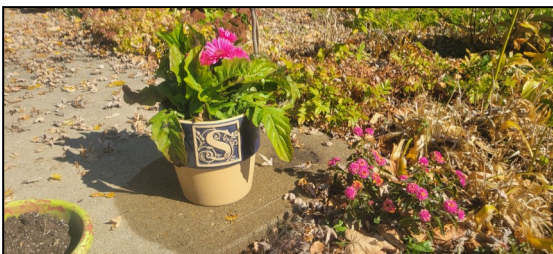
Soft slumber to you honeysuckle. Collect sweetness for next year's hummingbirds.

You see, my garden needs its beauty sleep. And I'll need patience while waiting for its return.

Winter is long, cold and dark. But the garden's spring awakening is always worth the wait.

Summer Annuals Bloom into Fall

photos by Louise Smith, Master Gardener 2006



These summer annuals continued to bloom during the warm sunny days of fall. (From Louise Smith's garden)

Freaky Fall Blooms

photo by Susie Carpenter, Master Gardener 2022



This freaky iris is blooming next to a fall Chrysanthemum (From Susie Carpenter's garden)

GARDEN MUSINGS

Winter Gardening for Old Folks

by *Chuck Zurhorst, Master Gardener 2019*



While sitting in your great room looking out the window at the snow covered shrubs and trees, think about how trees help the environment. Trees are essential to human life. Many trees have existed for thousands of years, constantly repopulating and replenishing

the oxygen essential for human life. Trees also supply vital crops and herbs that can be transformed into medicines and nutritious foods.

Trees are valuable to every community. This is why trees are planted in municipalities and have a noticeable impact on property values and aesthetics because of their towering beauty and environmental contribution.

Trees have canopies that serve as filters for pollutants and dust. A single tree can eliminate up to three pounds of pollutants every year. Trees also provide meaningful shade for people and absorb noise.

Some things to consider when selecting a tree are: Native species are always a good option; disease-resistant species will do well in any environment; always prioritize trees with large leaves; consider long lasting trees that will last for generations.

The best trees to plant for the environment are: Yellow Poplar, oaks and pines. Yellow Poplar/ Tulip Trees can reach 90 to 120 feet in height. Oaks have 90 varieties, are slow growing and have a large canopy that features amazing carbon sequestering. They also provide food for birds and animals. The White, Red and Ponderosa Pine species are excellent carbon-effective options that are suitable for backyard planting.

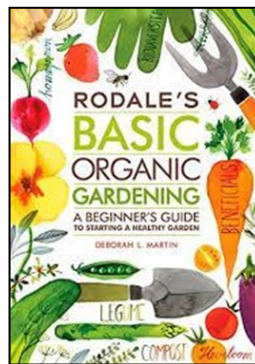
The variety of fast growing trees beneficial for the environment is endless and you don't have to break the bank to get what you are looking for. Today, trees are not only used to define a landscape but also to carry many positive benefits. The next time you decide to plant a tree, be sure to choose a reliable shade provider that will also do the environment a world of good.

FEATURED BOOK

Rodale's Basic Organic Gardening: A Beginner's Guide to Starting a Healthy Garden

by **Deborah L. Martin**

Reviewer: Terese Houle, Master Gardener 2019



Whether or not you are a practitioner of organic gardening, this book offers some helpful insight into ways you can incorporate a healthier approach to using your gardening toolbox. "At its heart, organic gardening is a system of working with nature to create conditions that benefit plants, people,

and the environment," author Martin explains. Organized in a way that is useful to you as the reader and the gardener, it's broken down into easy to read and follow categories: getting started (soil preparation and seed starting), tending and caring for your garden (including troubleshooting, pest and disease management), a whole section on common garden vegetables and flowers (with helpful tips on planting, tending, and harvesting), and a helpful section on extending your gardening season. As we nestle in for the winter, this is a good book to add to your reading list as you begin to dream of what your gardens will look like next year and patiently wait for the first arrivals of our 2023 seed catalogues.

GARDEN MUSINGS

Keeper of Memories

by Barbara Kochick, Master Gardener 2013



I'm pretty sure we have all said or heard someone say something along the lines of "that was my mother's favorite flower" or, "my sister made fairies out of those

flowers," or, "there was nothing like the asparagus my grandpa grew." The garden holds memories for us. This was brought home to me this past year. In the late winter we attended the Home and Garden Show.

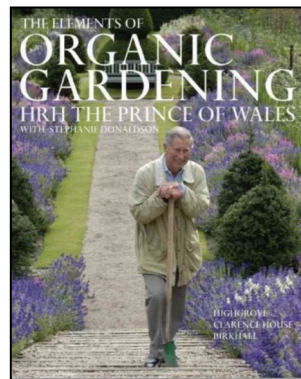
I was attracted to the flower seeds and roots for sale, especially a photo of a large trumpet shaped bright red flower called *Mirabilis jalapa*. I bought some roots and got them into the ground as soon spring arrived.

Now travel back several decades to my youth. We lived in the inner city and our single mom worked in town. My brother and I would often go to the bus stop to wait for her end of day return. The stop was on the side of the local tavern with a narrow strip of soil between the wall of the tavern and the sidewalk. I was fascinated by the flowers that bloomed in that strip. I don't know how I came to know the name or whoever started them there but they were called Four O'clocks because they bloomed at the end of the day just when my mom was coming home. We would fool around there, enjoy those flowers, greet her effusively, and walk home.

Back to this summer and the home show flower had grown up, gotten buds and finally bloomed. The tiny trumpet shaped flower looked nothing like the photo that I had anticipated and *Mirabilis Jalapa* was a Four O'clock!! It's not a common garden flower. I supposed because it is pretty unspectacular. But that little flower brought those summer day memories back. My mother has been gone a long time and my brother passed this summer but the two of them came back to me in those little posies.

The Gardening King

by Barbara Kochick, Master Gardener 2013



King Charles III loves gardens. When he was just 22 years old, the Prince of Wales addressed the Countryside in a 1970 conference to speak on what we now call "green issues." He endured a great deal of ridicule for his views. He was often dismissed as a crazy

eccentric who talked to his plants. But the rest of the world has caught up with these ideas and the new monarch now looks prophetic. He cares deeply about the land and has done so for a very long time.



In 1980, he bought the Highgrove estate in the Cotswolds and set about making it the manifesto of his ideas. Early on he invited eminent scientists and gardeners to help him develop the grounds.

He worked with them on special wildflowers mixes specifically for the gardens and lands of Highgrove. On the grounds he champions his beliefs in organic farming, gardening, designs, crafts, architecture, food production, health and waste management. As the heir to the throne, he could campaign about these issues. As monarch he is constitutionally obliged to be impartial but he is likely to still wield some soft power. Protecting nature he believes is a moral duty, above any politics.

The Highgrove gardens have been well documented in five books. And the man is big hearted. Highgrove has around 30,000 visitors a year in small groups. One of the great joys of having a garden is staring it with others, and His Majesty is extremely generous in this regard.

In and Around the Garden—You Won't Want to Miss It!

Mark your calendars with these important dates and upcoming activities and events!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Master Gardener Meeting (Ag Center)
December 12 (Mon.), 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

Winter Bird Feeding Program (Ag Center)
December 12 (Mon.), 1 p.m.
Fairfield SWCD's Tommy Springer and OSU's Carrie Brown

Deadline to Input Hours into Sales Force Program
December 15, 2022 (Thurs.)
If you need assistance, please reach out to Stacy Hicks at hicks.686@osu.edu.

Master Gardener Holiday Luncheon and 2023 Program Planning (Ag Center)
January 25 (Wed.), 11am-3pm
Lunch will be served.

MASTER GARDENER LUNCH AND LEARN WINTER 2023 OPPORTUNITIES

To Register, go to <https://mastergardener.osu.edu/> and click on the link for horticultural webinars

The Joys of Christmas Plants, Merry and Bright
December 7 (Wed.), 4-5 p.m.
Nicole Flowers-Kimmerle, Horticulture Educator, University of Illinois Extension

Slime Time: Frontiers of Slug and Snail Management in North America
December 7 (Thurs.), 12-1 p.m.
Rory McDonnell, Associate Professor, Crop and Soil Science, Oregon State University

The Cultural Importance of Spiders
January 5 (Wed), 4-5 p.m.
Codey Mathis, Graduate Student, Department of Entomology, Penn State University

Veggies on Trial: You be the Judge
January 19 (Thurs.), 12-1 p.m.
Ed Brown, Extension Educator, The Ohio State University (Athens County)

Getting Back to Basics with Houseplants
February 1 (Wed.), 4-5 p.m.
Pam Bennett, MGV Program Director, The Ohio State University

How to Grow Sunflowers at Home
February 16 (Thurs.), 12-1 p.m.
Brooks Warner, Extension Educator, The Ohio State University (Scioto County)

Flower Talk: How Plants Use Color as Communication
March 1 (Wed.), 4-5 p.m.
Ann Chanon, Extension Educator, The Ohio State University (Lake County)

Through the Vine is a publication of the Ohio State University Extension Office in Fairfield County
Lisa Stoklosa, Fairfield Master Gardener Volunteer Editor

For more information contact:

Connie Smith, Master Gardener Coordinator and OSU Extension ANR Program Assistant
smith.3204@osu.edu — 740.652.7267

For the latest information and news about OSU Extension in Fairfield County, including the Master Gardeners of Fairfield County, visit <http://fairfield.osu.edu/>



Ohio Master Gardener Program Mission

We are Ohio State University Extension trained volunteers empowered to educate others with timely research-based gardening information.